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PRESS RELEASE

March 3, 2006

THREE BUFFALO MEN SENTENCED TO LENGTHY PRISON SENTENCES FOR THEIR ROLES IN COCAINE DISTRIBUTION CONSPIRACY

Acting United States Attorney Kathleen M. Mehlretter announced today that Senior District Judge John T. Elfvin sentenced Fred Albino, 33, Oscar Vargas, also 33, and Manuel Hernandez, a/k/a "Manny," 36, all of Buffalo, to lengthy prison sentences based on their convictions for conspiring to distribute cocaine in the Buffalo area between early 1999 and May of 2001, in violation of Section 846 of Title 21 of the United States Code.

Hernandez and Albino, who were convicted after a ten day trial that ended on October 18, 2005, were sentenced to 151 months and 121 months, respectively, in federal prison. Vargas, who pled guilty on the eve of trial, also received a 121 month sentence. All three men were also ordered to serve 5 years on supervised release after they are released.

Assistant United States Attorneys Anthony M. Bruce and Everardo (Andy) Rodriguez, who tried the case, stated that these defendants were part of a large cocaine distribution ring that obtained multi-kilogram deliveries of cocaine in New York City and

brought the cocaine to Buffalo to distribute it. During the trial, the jury was shown drug records that the Horseheads police seized from Albino that recorded sales of over eleven kilograms of cocaine and the receipt of hundreds of thousands of dollars, as well as evidence of a fleet of “trap cars” (cars with hidden compartments for concealing and hauling cocaine).

All three defendants were remanded last October.

The conviction was the result of a joint investigation on the part of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent In Charge Peter J. Ahearn, and the New York State Police, under the direction of Special Investigations Unit Commander Major Frank H. Koehler.